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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/042,675	01/09/2002	John E. Jones	47171-00350USC1	6966

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EXAMINER

TABATABAI, ABOLFAZL

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2625

DATE MAILED: 01/14/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/042,675

Applicant(s)

JONES ET AL.

Examiner

Abolfazi Tabatabai

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 December 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 41-45,47-58,78-82 and 212-214 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 41-45,47-58,78-82 and 212-214 is/are rejected.

- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☒ The proposed drawing correction filed on 09 January 2002 is: a) ☒ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2,5,6,7. 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Double Patenting

1. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

2. Claims 41, 51 and 78 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 2 and 7 of U.S. Patent No. 6,363,164 B1 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,982,918.

Regarding claims 41, 51 and 78 respectively of application 10,042,675, recites "an input receptacle for receiving financial institution documents", as recites in claim 7, of 6,363,164 B1 (See column 91, lines 10-11), which is obviously considered substantially the same; a full image scanner (See column 91, lines 12-14); a transport mechanism (See column 91, lines 19-22); two output receptacle (See column 91, lines 19-22).

In addition claims 41, 51 and 78 of application 10,042,675 recites, " a controller coupled to the full image scanner and an interface coupled to the controller", wherein claim 7, of U.S 6,363,164 fails to teach.

On the other hand Mennie et al (U.S 5,982,918,) teach the above limitation in claim 21, (See column 85, lines 14-42).

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify claims 41, 51 and 78 of invention according to the teachings of Mennie et al, because the system greatly reducing the amount of labor needed to processes financial documents such as checks. The documents and transactions are processed electrically with minimal need to handle the paper checks or other documents and in this system, it is necessary for human operators to read and key the dollar amounts from the individual checks and deposit slips.

3. Claims 41-44, 47,48, 51-53, 57, 58, 78-80 and 214, are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 26-29, 31, 32 and 226 of U.S. application No. 10,037,021. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other, see below, because

Regarding claims 41, 51 and 78 respectively of application 10,042,675, recites " an input receptacle for receiving financial institution documents ", as recites in claim 26, of application 10,037,021 (See claim 26, line 2), which is obviously considered substantially the same; a full image scanner (See claim 26, line 3); a transport mechanism (See claim 26, lines 4-5); two output receptacle (See claim 26, lines 6-7); a

controller coupled to the full image scanner and an interface coupled to the controller(See claim 26, and line 15).

Regarding claims 42 and 52 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 27, of application 10,037,021.

Regarding claims 43 and 53 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 28, of application 10,037,021.

Regarding claim 44, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 29, of application 10,037,021.

Regarding claims 47, 57 and 79 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 31, of application 10,037,021.

Regarding claims 48, 58 and 80 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 32, of application 10,037,021.

Regarding claim 214, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 226, of application 10,037,021.

4. Claims 41-44,47,48, 50-54, 57, 58, 78-81 and 214, are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 23 of U.S. application No. 10,038,729. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other, see below, because

Regarding claims 41, 51 and 78 respectively of application 10,042,675, recites “an input receptacle for receiving financial institution documents”, as recites in claim 1, of application 10,038,729 (See claim1, line 2), which is obviously considered substantially the same; a full image scanner (See claim 1, line 3); a transport

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mechanism (See claim 1, lines 4-5); two output receptacle (See claim 1, lines 6-7); a controller coupled to the full image scanner and an interface coupled to the controller (See page 1, and lines 11-15).

Regarding claims 42 and 52 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 2, of application 10,038,729.

Regarding claims 43 and 53 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 3, of application 10,038,729.

Regarding claim 44, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 5, of application 10,038,729.

Regarding claims 47, 57 and 79 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 9, of application 10,038,729.

Regarding claims 48, 58 and 80 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 10, of application 10,038,729.

Regarding claim 50, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 13, of application 10,038,729.

Regarding claims 54 and 81 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 7, of application 10,038,729.

Regarding claim 214 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 16, of application 10,038,729.

5. Claims 41-44, 47, 48, 51-53, 57, 58, 78-80 and 214, are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable

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over claims 1 and 23 of U.S. application No. 10,039,568. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other, see below, because

Regarding claims 41, 51 and 78 respectively of application 10,042,675, recites "an input receptacle for receiving financial institution documents ", as recites in claim 1, of application 10,039,568 (See claim 1, lines 2), which is obviously considered substantially the same; a full image scanner (See claim 1, line 3); a transport mechanism (See claim 1, lines 4-5); two output receptacle (See claim 1, lines 7-9); a controller coupled to the full image scanner and an interface coupled to the controller (See claim 1, and line 15).

Regarding claims 42 and 52 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 2, of application 10,039,568.

Regarding claims 43 and 53 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 3, of application 10,039,568.

Regarding claim 44 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 5, of application 10,039,568.

Regarding claims 47, 57 and 79 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 9, of application 10,039,568.

Regarding claims 48, 58 and 53 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 10, of application 10,039,568.

Regarding claim 50 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 13, of application 10,039,568.

Regarding claims 54 and 81 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 7, of application 10,039,568.

Regarding claim 214, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 16, of application 10,039,568.

6. Claims 41-45, 47-49, 51-58, 78-82 and 212-214 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 23 of U.S. application No. 10,041,156. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other, see below, because

Regarding claims 41, 51 and 78 respectively of application 10,042,675, recites "an input receptacle for receiving financial institution documents ", as recites in claim 1, of application 10,041,156 (See claim1, line 3), which is obviously considered substantially the same; a full image scanner (See claim 1, line 4); a transport mechanism (See claim 1, lines 5-8); two output receptacle (See claim 1, lines 9-11); a controller coupled to the full image scanner and an interface coupled to the controller(See claim1, and lines 18-23).

Regarding claims 42 and 52 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 2, of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claims 43 and 53 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 7, of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claim 44, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 10, of application 10,041,156.

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Regarding claims 47, 57 and 79 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 13, of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claims 48, 58 and 80 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 14, of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claim 49, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 15, of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claims 54 and 81 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 27, of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claim 55, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 28, of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claim 56, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 29 of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claim 82, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 37, of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claim 213 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 15, of application 10,041,156.

Regarding claim 214, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 4, of application 10,041,156.

7. Claims 41-45, 47-49, 51-58, 78-80 and 214, are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 23 of U.S. application No. 10,042,086. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other, see below, because

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Regarding claims 41-44, 47, 48, 51-54, 57, 58, 78-81 and 214, respectively of application 10,042,675, recites " an input receptacle for receiving financial institution documents ", as recites in claim 1, of application 10,042,086 (See claim 1, line 3), which is obviously considered substantially the same; a full image scanner (See claim 212, line 4); a transport mechanism (See claim 212, lines 5-7); two output receptacle (See claim 212, lines 8-10); a controller coupled to the full image scanner and an interface coupled to the controller(See claim 212, and lines 16-20).

Regarding claims 42 and 52 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 2, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claims 43 and 53 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 7, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claim 44 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 10, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claim 45 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 11, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claims 47, 57 and 79 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 13, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claims 48, 58 and 80 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 14, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claim 49 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 15, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claims 54 and 81 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 27, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claim 55 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 28, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claim 56 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 29, of application 10,042,086.

Regarding claim 214 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 4, of application 10,042,086.

8. Claims 41, 51 and 78 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 23 of U.S. application No. 10,073,646. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other, see below, because

Regarding claims 41, 51 and 78 respectively of application 10,042,675, recites "an input receptacle for receiving financial institution documents ", as recites in claim 1, of application 10,073,646 (See page 1, line 3), which is obviously considered substantially the same; a full image scanner (See page 1, line 4); a transport mechanism (See page 1, lines 6-9); two output receptacle (See page 1, lines 10-12); a controller coupled to the full image scanner and an interface coupled to the controller(See page 1, and lines 18-22).

Regarding claims 42 and 52 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 213, of application 10,073,646.

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Regarding claims 43 and 53 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 214, of application 10,073,646.

Regarding claim 44, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 216, of application 10,073,646.

Regarding claims 54 and 81 of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 217, of application 10,073,646.

Regarding claim 214, of application 10,042,675, are identical to the claim 226, of application 10,073,646.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. Claims 41, 43-45, 50, 51, 53, 54, 81, 78, 82, 212 and 214 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dinan et al(4,888,812) in view of Elischer et al(5,040,226).

Regarding claim 41, Dinan et al disclose a system for processing financial institution documents comprising:

a multitude of compact full-image processing units communicatively coupled together to form a network, each of the full image processing units comprising:

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an input receptacle for receiving financial institution documents(Column 4, lines 56-67 and column 5, lines 1-5)

a full image scanner(Fig. 1 element 20, and column 5, lines 19-23)

a transport mechanism coupled to the input receptacle adapted to receive the documents from the input receptacle and transport the documents past a full image scanner and a discrimination unit(Fig. 1 element 14, and column 2, lines 46-56)

an output receptacle adapted to receive the documents from the transport mechanism after the documents have been transported past the full image scanner and discrimination unit(Column 5, lines 5-23)

a controller coupled to the full image scanner(Fig. 1 element 11 and column 4, lines 56-65)

However, Dinan et al do not teach: The full image scanner being adapted to obtain full video images of the documents, the scanner further being adapted to optically recognize fields within the documents and to automatically extract information from the fields;

the discrimination unit including an authenticator adapted to automatically determine the authenticity of the documents;

and

an interface coupled to the controller and adapted to automatically communicate with an outside accounting system, the outside accounting system being adapted to update financial accounts associated with the documents substantially immediately without human intervention.

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On the other hand Elischer et al teach: The full image scanner being adapted to obtain full video images of the documents, the scanner further being adapted to optically recognize fields within the documents and to automatically extract information from the fields(Column 5, lines 1-7 of Elischer et al)

the discrimination unit including an authenticator adapted to automatically determine the authenticity of the documents(Column 3, lines 57-65 of Elischer et al) and

an interface coupled to the controller and adapted to automatically communicate with an outside accounting system, the outside accounting system being adapted to update financial accounts associated with the documents substantially immediately without human intervention(Column 3, lines 34-37 and 57-65 of Elischer et al).

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Dinan et al's invention according to the teachings of Elischer et al, because the system greatly reducing the amount of labor needed to processes financial documents such as checks. The documents and transactions are processed electrically with minimal need to handle the paper checks or other documents and in this system, it is necessary for human operators to read and key the dollar amounts from the individual checks and deposit slips.

Regarding claim 43, the system of claim 41, wherein the output receptacle is a plurality of bins(Column 5, lines 8-19 of Dinan et al)

Regarding claim 44, the system of claim 41, further comprising a communications panel adapted to communicate operational instructions from the controller to a user(Column 5, lines 24-34 of Elischer et al).

Regarding claim 45, the system of claim 41, wherein the outside accounting system is adapted for storing, tracking, and analyzing the information from the full-image processing units(Column 6, lines 23-44 and column 8, lines 9-13 of Dinan et al).

Regarding claim 50, the system of claim 41, wherein the financial institution documents comprise checks and deposit slips(Column 5, lines 12-16 of Elischer et al).

Regarding claims 51 and 78 arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 41, are applicable to claims 51 and 78.

Regarding claim 53 arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 43, are applicable to claim 53.

Regarding claim 54, arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 44, are applicable to claim 54.

Regarding claim 78, arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 41, are applicable to claim 78.

Regarding claim 81, arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 50, are applicable to claim 81.

Regarding claim 82, arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 50, are applicable to claim 82.

Regarding claim 212, arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 50, are applicable to claim 212.

Regarding claim 214, arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 43, are applicable to claim 214.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

11. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

12 Claims 47, 48, 57, 58, 79 and 80 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dinan et al(4,888,812) and Elischer et al(5,040,226) in view of Graves et al(5,467,406).

Regarding claim 47, neither Dinan et al nor Elischer et al teach the system of claim 41, wherein the documents have wide an narrow dimensions and the documents are transported with their wide dimension parallel to the direction of transport.

On the other hand Graves et al teach, the documents have wide an narrow dimensions and the documents are transported with their wide dimension parallel to the direction of transport(Column 5, lines 10-32 of Graves et al).

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Dinan et al's invention according to the teachings of Graves et al, because the technique is based on the optical sensing of the bill reflectance characteristic obtained by illuminating and scanning a bill along its narrow and wide dimensions approximately about the central section of the bill, and currency

bills which have experienced a high degree exhibit such a reduction in both narrow and wide dimensions of the bills.

Regarding claim 48, the system of claim 41, wherein the documents have wide and narrow dimensions and the documents are transported with their narrow dimension parallel to the direction of transport(Column 5, lines 10-32 of Graves et al).

Regarding claims 57 and 79 arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 47, are applicable to claims 57 and 49.

Regarding claims 58 and 80 arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 48, are applicable to claims 58 and 80.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

13 The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

14 Claims 42, 49, 52, 55, 56, and 213 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dinan et al(4,888,812) and Elischer et al(5,040,226) in view of Granzow et al(4,521,008).

Regarding claim 42, neither Dinan et al nor Elischer et al disclose the system of claim 41, wherein the output receptacle is a single bin.

On the other hand Granzow et al teach: The output receptacle is a single bin(Column 9, lines 4-7).

Regarding claim 49, the system of claim 41, wherein the multitude of units are located at teller windows, retailers, and financial institutions (Column 3, lines 5-14 of Granzow et al).

Regarding claim 52, arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 42, are applicable to claim 52.

Regarding claim 55, the document processing system of claim 51, wherein the outside accounting system is a withdrawal system (Column 3, lines 5-18 of Granzow et al).

Regarding claim 56, the system of claim 51, further comprising a teller monitor coupled to the controller (Column 3, lines 5-18 of Granzow et al).

Regarding claim 213, arguments analogous to those presented above for claim 49, are applicable to claim 213.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Dinan et al's invention according to the teachings of Granzow et al, because by using the automatic teller machine it is important to implemented an excellent new system for transaction work to improve rationalization efficiency promotion and customer services.

Other prior art cited

15. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to Applicant's disclosure.

U. S. Patent (5,813,510) to Rademacher is cited for currency and coin-

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activated drop.

U.S. Patent (4,442,541) to Finkel et al is cited for methods of and apparatus for sensing the denomination of paper currency.

Contact Information

16. any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the Examiner should be directed to ABOLFAZL TABATABAI whose telephone number is (703) 306-5917.

The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, Bhavesh Mehta M, can be reached at (703) 308-5246.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

(703) 872-9314 (for **formal** communications; please mark
"EXPEDITED PROCEDURE")

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA. Sixth Floor (Receptionist).

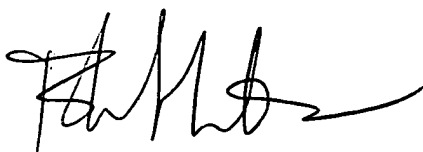
Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group Receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-4750

Abolfazl Tabatabai

Patent Examiner

Group Art Unit 2625

December 31, 2002



BHAVESH M. MEHTA
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600